



ROCKDALE COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
March 20, 2020**

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UPDATE: Rockdale County Remote Work Plan in Effect

ROCKDALE COUNTY, Ga. – Out of an abundance of caution, Rockdale County Government is taking measures to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19.

Rockdale County enacted a Daily Operation Protocol that went into effect, Mon., March 16 at 3 p.m. and extends through the week of March 23. Executive county officials will make their decision on whether to continue the protocol into the next week by 2 p.m. on Fri., March 27.

Within the protocol, several measures have taken place to protect employees and citizens including shutting down access and limiting access to several facilities and meetings.

Please be advised of the following provisions made by Rockdale County Departments:

Rockdale Water Resources

Residents will still have the ability to pay their water bill through Rockdale Water Services Customer Service via the county website at <https://ipn2.paymentus.com/cp/rwr>, via telephone at 1-844-396-2347 (which is available 24 hours), at the RWR drop box, located at 962 Milstead Avenue, Conyers, GA, 30012, and in person at United Community Bank, located at 1000 Highway 138 SE, Conyers, GA 30013. Anyone who is looking to establish or re-establish water service, please send an email to newwaterservice@rockdalecountyga.gov. For emergencies, please call 770-278-7500.

Rockdale County Fire-Rescue and E-911

Public Safety Personnel, Emergency Management Services, and the E911 Call Center will operate as normal. If you have an emergency, CALL 911. Rockdale County Fire Rescue and EMA administrative functions are operating off-site. If you need assistance with a business or administrative matter, please call 770-278-8401. Your call will be forwarded to the appropriate personnel. To schedule inspections, call 770-278-8401.

Department of Planning and Development

The Department of Planning and Development lobby is closed to the public and staff will be working remotely. Code enforcement will be out during limited hours assisting emergency management. The department can be reached by phone at 770-278-7100 or at the following emails pertaining to subject:

Planning – planning@rockdalecountyga.gov

Inspections – inspections@rockdalecountyga.gov

Zoning – planning@rockdalecountyga.gov

Code Enforcement - code.violationsmailbox@rockdalecountyga.gov

Recreation and Maintenance

All public events as well as facility rentals with the Parks and Recreation Division have been cancelled until April 15.

Closures include:

- Johnson Park Recreation Center
- Tennis Center at Wheeler Park
- Black Shoals Park
- The Walk of Heroes
- Costley Mill Park
- Olivia Haydel Senior Center/Senior Services – will continue Meals on Wheels
- Fleet Services – only answering emergency repairs/fuel needs, not routine maintenance

Outdoor park areas remain open with restrooms at this time. This is subject to change if cases are discovered in Rockdale as playgrounds, restrooms and equipment would be transfer areas. Weddings scheduled for March 28 and April 4 at Costley Mill Park have been cancelled.

Rockdale County Parks and Recreation recommends citizens follow National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) guidelines:

- Refrain from using parks or trails if you are exhibiting symptoms.
- Follow CDC's guidance on personal hygiene prior to and during use of parks or trails.
- While on trails, warn other users of your presence and as you pass, and step aside to let others pass.
- Follow CDC guidance on the recommended size of social gatherings including outdoor picnicking, pick-up sports and other group hangouts, and maintain proper physical distance at all times.

- Observe CDC's minimum recommended social distancing of 6 feet from other individuals at all times. If this is not possible, users should find an alternate location or depart that space.

Starting Tues., March 24, the Rockdale Recycling Center will open ONLY Tuesday and Saturday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. To protect staff, and limit interaction with the public, the center will only accept bagged household garbage. NO recyclables, woody debris or bulk waste will be accepted.

Rockdale County Animal Control, based upon recommendations set forth by the National Animal Care and Control Association, has implemented the following:

- Suspend low priority/non-emergency activity such as non-aggressive stray animal pick-up, leash law and licensing complaints, barking and nuisance complaints, trapping of community cats, and conflict mitigation scenarios.
- Respond to emergency and high priority calls for law enforcement assistance, injured stray animals, bite complaints, and aggressive dog complaints.
- Reduce non-essential shelter intake, including suspending non-emergency owner surrender intake and encouraging owners who are ill to keep their pets at home.

The staff will still be reporting to the center daily to clean and provide care for animals.

The center has moved to an appointment only system for rescue partners and owners of impounded animals. Staff can be reached via email at acadmin@rockdalecountyga.gov.

Rockdale County Board of Assessors

Rockdale County Board of Assessors is offering services remotely until further notice. The Board of Assessors Office will offer online applications/forms for Homestead Exemption, Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA), and Motor Vehicle Appeal. All forms will be accepted via email, except CUVA applications which must be mailed. The deadline for filing CUVA is April 1. Applications and certified check or money order can be mailed to P.O. Box 562, Conyers, GA 30012. The deadline for filing for Homestead Exemption is April 1. Applications can be emailed to boa@rockdalecountyga.gov.

For more information, contact the Board of Assessors office at (770-278-7676).

Rockdale Department of Transportation

The Rockdale County Department of Transportation (RDOT) staff will be working remotely and the RDOT office at 2570 Old Covington Hwy SW will be closed through March 20. During this time, RDOT will be fielding and reacting to all inbound calls at 470-277-4788 and 770-480-1170 in lieu of the actual main office number. The department is suspending normal maintenance and handling emergency calls and situations only. Emergency and essential service requests in our right of way are dead animals, downed trees, severe potholes/sinkholes, traffic signal malfunction, missing stop sign or line of sight issues.

For more information, contact John Moretto, Director of RDOT at john.moretto@rockdalecountyga.gov

Stormwater Management

All functions of the Rockdale County Stormwater Department are operational with remote work plans in place to best serve customers. All field crews are performing light maintenance to ensure the stormwater pipes are operational along the county's right-of-ways. In addition, the field crew and headquarters staff are on-call and standby for urgent situations. Stormwater Management appreciates the citizens' calm and responsible responses and patience. Follow the Stormwater Management Facebook page for active for updates and advisories at facebook.com/RCSWManagement. Citizens are also encouraged to reach the department via email, stormwater.billing@rockdalecountyga.gov. It is checked daily by staff. For emergencies, call 770-278-7155.

Board of Elections

In accordance to the Secretary of State's office, all early votes already cast in person and all absentee ballots will be counted and every Georgia voter that has not yet had a chance to cast a ballot in the March 24 elections will be able to do so on May 19, along with the elections already scheduled for that date. Early voting in person has ended at this time. For more information, call the Board of Elections Office at 770-278-7333.

In-person Early Voting for the May 19 election is still scheduled to begin Monday April 27 at all three early voting locations. Further updates will be provided upon notification from the Governor or Secretary of State. Voters wishing to cast a by mail absentee ballot, may complete the absentee ballot request form located on the Rockdale County Website, under the Board of Elections tab.

EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS (3 LOCATIONS)

MAIN - 1400 Parker Road, Conyers 30094

SOUTH - Conyers Church of Christ, 1410 Flat Shoals Road, Conyers 30013

NORTH - St. Simon's Episcopal Church, 1522 Highway 138, NE, Conyers 30013

Department of Finance

Bids may be postponed. Visit the Rockdale County website at rockdalecountyga.gov or email tina.malone@rockdalecountyga.gov

Department of Talent Management

Talent Management will be observing the remote working protocol. For any questions, the public an email the Department of Talent Management at talent.management@rockdalecountyga.gov.

Rockdale UGA Cooperative Extension

The Cooperative Extension Office will move to teleworking and will not have in-office personnel. All 4-H events and group meetings have been cancelled for at least 2 weeks at this time. Staff will still be accessible by email and phone and through the Facebook page (UGA Extension Rockdale County). Cooperative Extension will not be accepting soil or water samples but will provide guidance and options for those clients. For questions, send emails to marybeth.hornbeck@rockdalecountyga.gov.

Nancy Guinn Memorial Library

The Nancy Guinn Memorial Library will have essential staff working a modified schedule 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Monday- Thursday) and is closed to the public. The Library will close today at 3 p.m. through March 31. This date is subject to change and will be evaluated two weeks at a time.

For more information call the Library at 770-388-5040.

Rockdale Court Services

State and Superior Court:

The Rockdale County Courthouse is open for critical business, warrants, filing of Temporary Protection Orders and bond issues. The Order Declaring A Judicial Emergency signed by Chief Superior Court Judge David Irwin HAS NOT cancelled ALL court sessions in the Rockdale circuit. Essential court sessions will still take place. Jury trials are the only cases cancelled/postponed in March and April.

Grand Jury for April 6, 2020 is cancelled. Anyone that received a jury summons for Grand Jury on April 6, 2020 may discard the summons.

If you are a victim, witness, defendant, attorney or any other person affiliated with a case and you are scheduled for a court appearance in the Rockdale Judicial Circuit between now and April 13, 2020 - please contact the applicable court before you decide to not appear.

For State or Superior Courts, please contact 770-278-7900 Monday through Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Direct contacts for Superior Court:

Chief Judge David B. Irwin or Susan Simons: 770-278-7740

Judge Robert F. Mumford or Loquita Buckhault: 770-278-7690

Temporary Protective Orders - Adrienne Cooper: 770-278-7696 or the District Attorney's office 770-278-7961

Magistrate Court:

Pursuant to the Orders Declaring Judicial Emergency of Georgia Supreme Court Justice Harold Melton and Rockdale County Superior Court Chief Judge David Irwin, certain court hearings have not been cancelled during the next 2 weeks in the Rockdale Judicial Circuit.

The Court shall remain open to address essential matters such as those where an immediate liberty or safety concern is present requiring the attention of the Court as soon as available; and criminal court search warrants, arrest warrants, initial appearances, and bond reviews during this state-wide judicial emergency. Further, all court activities shall be conducted in a manner to limit exposure.

Magistrate Court First Appearance and Bond Matters – First appearance hearings will generally be conducted by videoconferencing as available. Bond reviews will be undertaken regularly and every Wednesday, with the opportunity for counsel for the defendants and the prosecutor, to be heard by videoconferencing or at the jail as determined by the Court. The prosecutors and defense counsel are strongly encouraged to communicate with each other by phone and email regarding probable cause and pretrial release issues during this time. The Court is available to consider proposed consent bond orders and filed prosecutorial affidavits, or joint motions, to dismiss warrants due to insufficient evidence.

Magistrate Court Civil Matters – The Magistrate Court Clerk’s Office will be open during its normal business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday until further notice.

- New civil actions may be filed, with the required court costs, by mail, in-person and e-filing.
- Defendants may file answers by mail, in-person, e-filing or email to magctanswers@rockdalecountyga.gov.
- Motions, requests and other subsequent filings may be filed by parties by mail, in-person and e-filing.

If you are scheduled to appear in Magistrate Court beginning March 23, 2020 through April 13, 2020, please be advised that all civil hearings during this time have been suspended until further notice. Please be advised that your court date will be rescheduled and notice of a new court date will be provided. PLEASE DO NOT APPEAR DURING THIS TIME. You may contact us at (770) 278-7800 or magcourt@rockdalecountyga.gov for more information.

Magistrate Court Ordinance Matters – Fine payments may be submitted by mailing a money order, payable to the Rockdale County Magistrate Court, with the correct case number identified on the memo line. Defendants have the option to enter a plea of guilty or no contest and pay the scheduled fine by mail or in-person visit to the Magistrate Court Clerk’s Office. If you desire to negotiate a resolution with the county attorney, you may make that request via email at cheryl@cfreemanlaw.com. There will not be any additional ordinance hearings, unless incarcerated defendants or immediate serious safety issues are involved, until the expiration of the pertinent Orders Declaring Judicial Emergency.

Juvenile Court:

The Rockdale County Juvenile Court remains OPEN to address essential Court functions. However, court staff and employees will be working and carrying on the day-to-day functions of the Court from home. During this time, the Juvenile Court will continue to hold delinquency detention hearings, dependency emergency removal matters and emergency matters. However, to the extent that the hearings mentioned above are held, they will be held by videoconference to limit the risk of exposure to the public.

For questions call 770-278-7777 or visit <https://rockdalecountyga.gov/county-departments/court-services/juvenile-court/>.

Probate Court

The following changes in the hours and operations of the Rockdale County Probate Court will remain in effect until further notice.

Petitions – All petitions must be filed by mail. Standard probate forms can be found online at georgiacourts.gov, or gasupremecourt.us. Complete petitions can be mailed to probateestates@rockdaecountyga.gov to obtain the appropriate filing fees prior to mailing the petition. Any petitioner who needs to take an oath must call 770-278-7700 to schedule an appointment.

Hearings – All hearings are cancelled until further notice. Only hearings pertaining to emergency matters will be scheduled as needed.

Vital Records – To Request birth or death certificates, please visit dhp.georgia.gov online. For those without internet, contact the Probate Court at 770-278-7700 for instructions on how to obtain the certificate. Funeral homes and crematories must email your request to probtevitarecords@rockdalecountyga.gov.

Marriage Licenses – Applications for a marriage license must be requested by mail. When the applicants have completed the application, they must contact the Probate court at 770-278-7700 for an appointment to complete the process.

Weapons Carry Licenses – Probate courts across the state of Georgia will temporarily suspend the acceptance of applications for Weapons Carry Licenses and Renewal Weapons Carry Licenses pursuant to an order of the Supreme Court of Georgia declaring a Judicial Emergency.

Licenses due to renew during the emergency period will not expire. Chief Justice Melton's order puts a pause on all deadlines created by law or rule. Therefore, those up for renewal can renew after the emergency ends. Presently, that date is April 14, 2020. If that date is extended, further order will issue. As an example, add 30 days to the original date of expiration or renewal.

All changes outlined above are intended to protect the health and welfare of the public and employees of the Rockdale County Probate Court. Cooperation is necessary and appreciated.

District Attorney's Office

In accordance with the Order Declaring a Judicial Emergency issued by Chief Superior Court Judge David B. Irwin, the DA's Office will remain OPEN and available to assist victims, attorneys, and carry out essential business of the Office.

However, from March 23, 2020 through April 10, 2020, entry into the Office for the general public, attorneys, victims, witnesses, and other non-county staff members will be BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

****Individuals wishing to make appointments may do so by contacting the Office at 770.278.7990 or by making arrangements with individual investigators, victim witness advocates, or Assistant District Attorney(ADA) via email.**

****If you need assistance and know the ADA or Investigator assigned to your case, you may contact them via email as they are all working remotely M-F 9am -4pm.**

****If you do not know the ADA or Investigator assigned to your case, you may call (770)278-7990 to leave a message. You will be contacted by the end of the business day.**

VICTIMS:

If you are the victim in a pending case and need assistance you may contact our Victim Witness Advocates at (770)278-7975 M-F 9am - 4pm

If you are the victim of a crime and are in danger, please call 911 or go to directly to the Rockdale County Sheriff's Office or the City of Conyers Police Department to report the crime.

TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE ORDERS (TPOs):

On Thursday March 26, 2020 AND Friday March 27, 2020 from 9am -4pm, the DA's Office will be OPEN to assist in the filing of Temporary Protective Orders (TPO) in Room 303 at the Rockdale County Courthouse

*****SUBJECT TO CHANGE*****

Rockdale County Tax Commissioner's Office

The Rockdale County Tax Commissioner's Office has closed lobby access to the public until further notice. Agents can be reached during normal business hours at 770-278-7600 to complete most transactions, and by text at 678-964-4712 to obtain information. There are also several motor-vehicle and tax-related services available to the public, without the need of in-person interactions. Residents can access services online or utilize MVD Self-Service kiosks to complete transactions.

Motor vehicle transactions can be completed using the e-services portal online at <https://eservices.drives.ga.gov> or at any MVD Self-Service Kiosk, including Kroger in Conyers Square. Property tax transactions can be completed online at www.rockdaletaxoffice.org.

For more information, call the Rockdale County Tax Commissioner's Office at 770-278-7600, send a text to 678-964-4712 or visit www.rockdaletaxoffice.org.

Please be advised of the following meeting changes that went in effect Friday, March 13:

- Shop Talk – All 4 events that were scheduled to happen on March 21, May 16, August 15, and October 17 have been postponed indefinitely. New Dates TBD.
- Chairman Oz Nesbitt Spring Break Enrichment Camp – The event that was scheduled for April 6th through April 8th, has been cancelled.
- The Rockdale State of the County Address will not be open to the public, however, it will be broadcast live via the Rockdale County Website and Facebook Pages at 3 p.m. on the scheduled date of event – Thurs., March 26.
- Rockdale County Homeowners and Civic Association Meeting – The meeting set for April 16 has been cancelled indefinitely.
- The Great American Clean-Up – The event set for April 11 at Pine Log Park has been postponed indefinitely; Date TBD.
- Rockdale County Animal Control Meeting – The meeting set for April 15 has been postponed indefinitely; Date TBD.
- The Costley Mill Event Center Grand Opening, scheduled for Wed., April 29 has been postponed indefinitely; Date TBD.

These closures and procedures will remain in place until further notice. Rockdale County is monitoring the evolving situation involving the novel coronavirus. This is subject to change. Please continue to follow the Rockdale County Facebook Page at facebook.com/RockdaleGov and the Rockdale County website at rockdalecountyga.gov for information.

For any questions or concerns, please send a direct message to the Rockdale County Facebook Page or by contacting the See Something, Say Something hotline at 770-278-7888 or at saysomething@rockdalecountyga.gov.

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